

A volunteer, as an authorized agency representative assisting in the implementation of state/agency programs, policies and functions, is subject to the same standards of conduct and responsibilities as an employee.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

The confidentiality policies for staff and volunteers are based on state and federal confidentiality laws. Access to confidential information is determined by whether the individual who receives confidential information needs the information to perform his/her duties. The CRC must look at the specific tasks that each volunteer performs and determine how much information the volunteer needs in order to perform their assigned tasks.

The confidentiality policies that pertain to staff also apply to volunteers. Volunteers should never talk to anyone outside the agency about the people that our agency serves. At the same time, volunteers must realize that our policies and procedures may require them at times to reveal confidential information that they obtained in the performance of their duties.

During orientation of new volunteers, confidentiality policies shall be explained. A general statement on confidentiality is included on the DHS-1181, Volunteer Services Agreement, and the DHS-1182A, Volunteer Registration Record for Short Term Volunteers; see Reference Forms & Publications Manual (RFF) Items 1181 and 1182A. The CRC is to ask the volunteer if they understood the policy and answer any questions before the volunteer signs the form.

## Ride-Along Individuals

Individuals (such as a volunteer's spouse) who ride-along with a registered volunteer while transporting a DHS client may unintentionally obtain confidential information. Because of this possibility, the ride-along should also be informed of the confidentiality policy and sign a confidentiality statement.

**Note:** Ride-along individuals should be encouraged to complete an entire registration packet.

**Access to Program  
Case Records**

Information contained in all program case records is confidential and may be released to office volunteers only under limited circumstances. Volunteers are **not** allowed access to Children's Protective Service (CPS) or Foster Care (FC) records.

If a student intern studying social work, sociology, human services, counseling etc. is placed in the services unit and supervised by a services supervisor, that student intern, if also registered as a DHS volunteer, may be allowed access to CPS and FC records as part of his or her internship duties and responsibilities.

There are statutes and federal regulations that determine what information may and may **not** be released; see 1975 PA 238, The Child Protection Law as amended being MCL 722.621 et seq.

Only information relevant to the performance of the volunteer's assignment should be provided. It is important to review the information contained in Bridges Administrative Manual Item 310, **CONFIDENTIALITY AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO CASE RECORDS**, before the release of any information to a volunteer.